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ABSTRACT

This manual was developed to facilitate the initial training of a group of pre-retirement peer counselors and to introduce them to the basics of helping for clients facing pre-retirement issues. An introduction explains the use of the manual and urges users to complete suggested exercises when reading the manual. The next section lists learning goals and activities. The goals are followed by brief definitions of peer counseling and helping. The section entitled "Being" helps the user examine who he/she is and how this plays an important role in helping. Areas discussed include self-concept and self-esteem, assumptions, and reframing. The next section, "Doing", examines the skills necessary for effective counselling. Topics covered include: (1) active attending (listening skills, observation); (2) content and feelings; (3) core conditions; (4) problem solving; (5) assisting clients to action; (6) referrals and limitations; and (7) closing and termination. Solutions to exercises in the sections on reframing, content and feelings, and problem solving are appended. The manual concludes with a reading list for further study. (NB)

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PRE-RETIREMENT PEER COUNSELLING TRAINING MANUAL

Prepared by

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1986

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This manual was developed to facilitate the initial training of a group of pre-retirement peer counsellors in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It was devised to introduce them to the basics of helping for clients facing pre-retirement issues. I thank Gordon Hancock and Susan Gerlach for their assistance and support of this project.

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PRE-RETIREMENT PEER COUNSELLING TRAINING MANUAL

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Pre-Retirement Peer Counselling Training Manual

1.0 Introduction

This manual will acquaint you with the basic skills needed to conduct effective peer counselling. Parts of it may be used during the training sessions or your trainer may ask you to read or work on sections between sessions. It will give you some basics in helping others face pre-retirement issues, but it will not make you an expert counsellor. The manual is intended to be read and used. You will find STOP signs throughout, to indicate exercises that encourage your involvement. Your learning will be strengthened if you stop and take the time to complete these exercises.

After this introduction you will find a section on your learning goals. This is what you will be able to do after completing the manual. In addition to the goals is a list of activities. The goals are followed by a brief definition of peer counselling and helping. The next section is entitled: Being. This section examines who you are and how this plays an important role in helping. The following section, Doing, examines the skills necessary for effective counselling. The manual ends with directions for further reading that can assist you in becoming a more effective peer counsellor.

I will share some of my ideas, values, and opinions so that you will become more aware of your own values and ideas. I suggest you read with a pencil or pen handy. Make your reading an active pursuit of knowledge rather than a passive reception of learning. Write out your point of view. Feel free to disagree with me or talk back in the margin. Try putting new concepts or ideas into your own words. Write out questions for yourself or questions you want to discuss with your trainer or the other participants in the program. Counselling is serious but find time to enjoy and play as you learn.

2.0 Goals & Activities

After completing this manual you will be able to:

1. Define peer counselling.
2. Explain the role "being" has in counselling.
3. List 10 of your expectations or assumptions.
4. Define reframing and state how it applies to counselling.
5. Write 3 of your own examples of reframing.
6. Demonstrate active attending through listening and observation.
7. State 5 core conditions of counselling.
8. Outline the problem-solving model.
9. Given a problem, show how you could guide a client in solving it.
10. Provide 3 ways to assist clients to action.
11. Give 2 ways that you plan to continue learning about peer counselling.

Here is a list of the activities or STOPs in the primer:

Stop 1	Define Peer Counselling.
Stop 2	Define Helping.
Stop 3	Who are you?
Stop 4	Self-Esteem.
Stop 5	A Yawn.
Stop 6	Your Assumptions.
Stop 7	Ambiguous Figures.
Stop 8	Framing & Reframing.
Stop 9	Listening Exercise.
Stop 10	Tentative Paraphrase.
Stop 11	Questions.
Stop 12	Non-Verbal Frames.
Stop 13	Content Paraphrases.
Stop 14	Feelings.
Stop 15	Core Conditions.
Stop 16	Problem-Solving.
Stop 17	Limitations & Referrals.
Stop 18	Carry On Counselling.

3.0 Definition of Peer Counselling

STOP...1

Take 5 minutes to define peer counselling in your own words.

If you took the time to write an answer your learning will be more effective.

To me, peer counselling means the performance of limited counselling functions by persons of a similar background to the client. This means that you are not a fully trained counsellor but you can offer some of the basic counselling skills to people who come to you for help. Later, you will examine some of your limitations as a counsellor, and when to make referrals to appropriate sources. You have an advantage in counselling your clients because you will probably share or had many of the same concerns and dealt with many of the same issues. Also, it has been demonstrated that we tend to talk with people who are similar to us, so your clients will probably feel comfortable talking with you because they view you as similar to them.

A word of caution is needed here. Being a peer counsellor can be a double-edged sword. On one edge, it helps you to understand the person you work with because your experiences may have been similar. On the other edge, you need to be aware that people can experience the same event differently. You need to be aware of your assumptions and to check with your client how they are experiencing an issue. You never really know exactly how another person feels, but being a peer can move you one step closer to understanding others and helping them understand themselves.

STOP...2

Take 10 minutes to respond to this question:

What does it mean to help someone?

This is a good question to discuss during your training sessions. Many books have been written on the topic and many different answers have been given to the question. There is evidence that suggests counselling can be for better or for worse and we have an obligation to make our counselling effective.

I believe helping someone means giving of yourself and your skills. I give the person I'm helping as much personal power as possible so they take responsibility for exploring their world and making some of those tough decisions that living requires. I give them my attention through active attending. I believe the client is the expert on their life while I offer some skills in helping them to explore, understand, and take action. I care for the person but I am aware that I cannot solve their problems. Occasionaly I might provide information but I avoid giving advice because I know if the client comes up with a solution there is a better chance they will put it into action. I am there to meet their needs and I get excited when they develop new understandings or make changes. I have faith in each person who comes to see me and believe in their ability to take care of themselves.

Now, take a few more minutes to elaborate on your view of helping. At the next session, discuss your views with other participants. By talking about our views we become more aware of them and by sharing our views we have an opportunity to discover different ideas and to modify our views when it is appropriate.

4.0 Being

"The way to do is to be." - Lao Tzu

An old Chinese sage wrote these words over five thousand years ago. In peer counselling this means that who you are (your personality) plays a significant role in how well your client does. Some counselling theorists, such as Carl Rogers, say it is even more important than what we do! I believe both are important. We need to have our life in order and we need skills to help our client. Good quality care begins with caregivers caring for themselves. We cannot be perfect, that's impossible! What this suggests is that we try to become who we are, we look after ourselves, and we know our limitations. Looking after yourself means more than eating right and going for regular medical checkups. It means being aware of your feelings and reactions. It also means handling your own problems and concerns effectively. Do you take the time and effort to care for yourself so that you can provide good quality care for another?

4.1 Self-Concept & Self-Esteem

STOP...3

Who are you?

Answer this question 20 times.

Your answers comprise your self-concept. These are features about yourself. The features may have ranged from your name and age to adjectives such as happy or tired.

STOP...4

Identify the items from Stop 3 that are most important to you.

Identify the items from Stop 3 that are least important to you.

What are the implications of this for your self-esteem?

Your self-esteem is the evaluation you make of your self-concept. Generally we are not neutral about ourself. We tend to judge ourself, sometimes negatively, sometimes positively. This is not a test unlocking the secrets of your personality. This exercise is to stimulate thinking about yourself and how your view of yourself would effect your counselling. Can you see the difference your counselling would have if you had high versus low self-esteem? You might also keep in mind your clients' self-esteem when you are helping. Generally people with higher self-esteem will be more prepared to take action and deal with difficult situations. If your client has very low self-esteem this might make it more difficult for him or her.

4.2 Assumptions

We all make assumptions. We cannot check out everything we see and hear so we have to assume many things. Your background, experiences, values, and expectations will effect the assumptions you have about yourself and others.

Here are two examples. Someone who has failed at a number of tasks may begin to assume they will fail at anything they try. They may become discouraged and not even try anything new. The reality of the situation is probably less important than their assumption in determining their future

behavior. Their assumption will effect their feelings, thoughts, and behavior.

Another example is if you are talking with someone and they begin to yawn.

STOP...5

Take 2 minutes to write an answer to:

What is your assumption about the person yawning?

Depending upon your asssumption your behavior with that person will be altered. If you assumed that they yawned because they were tired you might stop talking because you feel you are boring them. Or they might yawn to stretch out their jaw. Or maybe you yawned and yawns are sometimes contagious. Or maybe they are nervous, their yawn might be an attempt to get more oxygen to their system.

So what it the point of all this? The point is that effective peer counsellors know themselves and become aware of the assumptions they make about themselves and others. You need to keep questioning the assumptions you make about yourself, clients, and counselling. You also need to check your assumptions about clients, with them. This helps you to understand them and it gives them feedback about themselves.

STOP...6

Take thirty minutes for this exercise.

Write down ten of your assumption about people, relationships, or helping.

After you have written your assumptions take some time to see how they

would effect your counselling. For instance, if you assume all people are good how does this effect your counselling? Or if you believe that helping always means doing something for another, how does this effect your helping? During your training, share your values, assumptions, or expectations with other participants. Ask them about their values and assumptions. Don't agree or disagree with other participants Instead, try to fully understand their point of view. Remember, there are no right answers when it comes to assumptions.

4.3 Reframing

Reframing is the ability to see something from a variety of perspectives. As a counsellor, this means to be able to see things from your client's point of view, your point of view, and maybe a few other perspectives.

STOP...7

Examine the page that follows and respond to the various questions

Take your time and ask others for their frames.

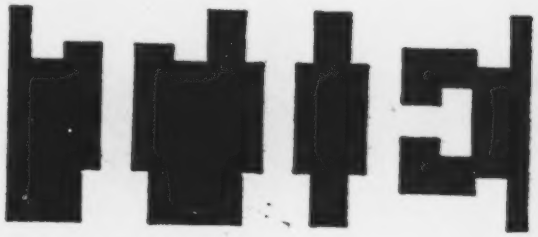
Answers to the reframing exercise are in Appendix 1.

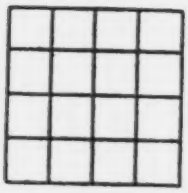
Try to do it on your own before looking at the answers.

The reframing exercise shows that figures drawn on paper can be seen from many different perspectives. Your values, assumptions, and expectations will effect what you see. With the first three figures there is no right or wrong answer. The figures can be interpreted in more than one way. Framing and reframing do not only apply to this exercise. Framing is something we do every minute, yet we are seldom aware of it. We have frames about the weather, food, movies, books, people, ourselves, etc. For instance, one person

REFRAMING EXERCISE

What do you see in the four figures on the right hand side of this page?





How many squares can you count?

A boy and his father are in an accident. The boy is injured and the father is killed. The boy is rushed to the hospital. The doctor is summoned but refuses to preform the operation saying, "I cannot operate on this boy, he is my own son." Explain

might frame a hot day as a great day because they like the heat while another person who finds hot temperatures uncomfortable might frame the day as awful. Each person has a different frame even though they are experiencing the same temperature.

Effective counsellors become aware of their frames and learn the ability to reframe situations with their clients and themselves. For instance, I believe counselling is serious business but I also believe that it is important to laugh with my clients. A sense of humour can be a good way to cope with situations. So at times, clients and I will change the frames we have of counselling. We will utilize reframing in the section on doing, especially in discussing active attending, non-verbal communication, empathy, and problem-solving.

STOP...8

Write 3 examples of Reframing from your own life.

First, write the original frame you had for the event or experience.

Then, write a way that you reframed the event so it had a new meaning.

5.0 Doing

This section elaborates on some of the skills necessary to conduct effective peer counselling. The last section examined who you are, while this section examines what you do. Both are important components of effective counselling. Active attending is a central feature of counselling. This involves attending to both content and feelings. Attending to feelings and discussing feelings brings out the richness and vitality in helping. Attending to feelings is important because most of our difficulties and decisions involve more than the rational side of ourselves. The core conditions of empathy, respect, and genuineness are also important aspects of the helping relationship. Attending to the client also involves communicating your understanding to the client. Problem-solving is an important feature of counselling that becomes necessary once the situation is understood and the client feels comfortable and ready to look at alternatives and take action. Effective peer counsellors know their limitations and make referrals to other people and agencies when it will help the client. Discussing closing and termination is especially important with your clients because they must deal with a number of changes and losses.

5.1 Active Attending

A counselling relationship gives your client a unique opportunity to be fully attended to. Having someone listen to what you say and really try to understand the meanings you convey can be a very significant factor in change. I like the Chinese symbol for listening. The Chinese characters which compose the verb listen include: ear, you, eyes, undivided attention, and heart. You do not just sit there repeating what the client said, you listen with all of yourself.

5.1.1 Listening Skills

Many people downgrade listening by saying, "all I did was just listen to the person." Listening is very difficult work that demands all of your attention and energy. For instance, a person can talk at about 140 words per minute but we can process language at 600 words per minute. This means you have an extra 460 words a minute to play around with as another person talks. If you are thinking about your shopping list or what you are going to do when the session is over you are not actively listening. When you use that extra 460 words to work at understanding your client, you are involved in the hard work of listening.

Why is listening so important? When you actively listen you demonstrate respect for another person. You tell them through your actions that you believe that they are important. To be effective in counselling you must try to listen so well that the person you are counselling will listen to themselves in new ways and hear things that they were only vaguely aware of. By listening you begin to identify why the person came to you and what might be done to help them with their concern. In counselling, we need to slow down before we rush into solving problems. If we don't take the time to listen, we might solve false problems, or we might not develop enough understanding to guide the client to an adequate solution. Active listening helps us to check out our assumptions and to see the world from the other person's point of view (reframing & empathy).

STOP...9

Find someone who will let you listen to them for 10 minutes.

Tell the person you are working on your listening skills.

For 10 minutes, listen and communicate your listening to that person.

After the exercise, ask the person you listened to for some feedback.

How did they know you were listening to them?

After you're finished, write down your evaluation of your listening.

What were your listening strengths? What do you want to improve?

Here are five specific attending skills:

A. SOLER. Soler is an acronym for the basics in physical attending.

S - Squarely Facing

O - Openess

L - Body Leaning

E - Eye contact

R - Relaxed

To attend to the client you need to be facing them squarely or at a slight angle. This nonverbal behavior shows the client you are ready to attend. You should also be out in the open, do not counsel from behind a desk. Your body may be leaning slightly forward and you should maintain a comfortable amount of eye contact with the client. You wouldn't keep looking at your watch or out the window. Try to relax. Above all, the way you attend should be comfortable for both you and the person you are working with. SOLER acts as a guide. During training, try different attending postures to see what is comfortable and to receive feedback on what others find comfortable.

B. Minimal encouragers. Minimal encourages will help your client talk about their situation. Such things as eye contact, head nods, leaning foreward, and "mm-hmms" all let your client know that you are following what they say and encourages them to continue talking. A word of caution here. You want to make sure you do understand what your client is saying.

Don't nod your head or say, "mm-hmm" when you do not understand what the client is saying. Good listening means frequent verbal interchange with the focus on the client.

C. Paraphrases. A good listener frequently provides tentative paraphrases of what the client has just said. You repeat back in a tentative and slightly different way what the client stated. This is to make sure you understand clients and to give them a chance to hear themselves. You can often begin these paraphrases with tentative openings, such as:

Let me check this out, you are saying.....

It sounds like.....

Perhaps you feel.....

What you are telling me is.....

You can also communicate tentativeness with your voice tone. If your voice goes up at the end of a statement it usually communicates some questionning or tentativeness. Remember clients are the expert and you are trying to help them explore.

STOP...10

Write three tentative paraphrase openings, like the ones above.

D. Summary. A summary is similar to a paraphrase but involves more content. Summaries are provided at the end of a counselling session or after the client has provided a lot of material. This helps to bring the session into focus for both the counsellor and client. It also provides clients with a fuller understanding of their concern and some alternatives of where to proceed.

E. Questions. Questions are the most common way we try to get information. It is very tempting to play the detective in counselling and to keep asking questions. Unfortunately, when you ask a lot of questions you start to take control of the counselling session and you may steer the conversation in a certain direction. I would encourage you to ask less questions and to make more paraphrases and summaries. When you ask questions, ask open-ended questions. These are questions that require more than a one word answer.

For example, "How are you feeling?" This is an open-ended question and may get the person talking. If you ask: "Do you feel good?" This is a closed question that requires only a one word response. The open-ended question helps you and the client to explore the issues, a prerequisite for the beginning of a counselling relationship. It also gives the client more responsibility for the direction of the counselling session.

STOP...11

Write 5 closed questions and 5 open-ended questions.
Discuss your questions with the group to receive feedback on the questions.

5.1.2 Observation

You need to attend to more than the words of your client. You must also attend to their nonverbal behavior. This includes such things as: voice tone, voice pitch, silence, gestures, facial expression, posture, etc. Birdwhistell, a researcher on non-verbal communication, has argued that 80% of our message is communicated to another through non-verbal means. You

cannot read a person like a book, but attending to their non-verbal behavior will help you to understand them. It is very important to check out your frames or assumptions about another's non-verbal behavior, as the behavior may have many different meanings, as you already saw in the case of someone yawning. For instance, if a client is squirming in their chair and looking around you might assume they are nervous and you might try to put them at ease or do a perception check to see if they are nervous. Maybe they just have to go to the toilet!

Some of the factors you should attend to are:

The way the client is dressed.
The client's posture.
The client's facial expressions.
The client's use of gestures.
Discrepancies between verbal and nonverbal messages.
The distance the client sits from you.
Rate of speech.
Loudness/softness of voice.
Affect in voice.

Give three possible frames/meanings for each non-verbal behavior:

Client wrings her hands

Client slouches in the chair

Client smiles slightly

Client scratches back of his head

Client flinches

5.2 Content and Feelings

A. Content. All of our conversations with people involve content. Whether disussing the weather or the state of the world. In counselling, it is important to understand the content of the speaker's words. What are the basic ideas or themes the client is stating. Can you paraphrase these to the satisfaction of the client? The next exercise is designed for you to paraphrase the clients content.

STOP...11

You will read six client statements.

Write a content paraphrase for each statement.

What is the specific message? Avoid the feelings expressed for now.

When you have written out a paraphrase, check in Appendix 2 for samples.

1. "We just don't know what to do. Should we stay here in Winnipeg with our family and friends or should we move to B.C. for a nicer winter."

Your content paraphrase.....

2. "I am worried that I won't have enough money to retire on. I never knew about R.R.S.P.s and I've only contributed to Canada Pension for the last 10 years."

Your content paraphrase.....

3. "I'm so unhappy right now. My husband was planning to retire so we could finally travel and now he doesn't want to retire and he doesn't want to go travelling."

Your content paraphrase.....

4. "It's mom. She has been pretty sick lately and I don't think we can look after her at home anymore but I just can't stand the thought or her going into a nursing home. She has lived at home all her life and it seems like a terrible thing to do to a person of ninety."

Your content paraphrase.....

5. "Before Mildred died I was so busy taking care of her that I didn't realize what was happening. Now that my wife is gone I have no one. I lost touch with all my old friends. I just wander around the house without much to do."

Your content paraphrase.....

6. "This is what I've finally been waiting for. No more 9 to 5, I can do exactly what I want to do when I want to do it. I have dreamed of not having to work for years and now it is finally going to be true."

Your content paraphrase.....

B. Feelings - We do not just experience things at a content level. We often have feelings about situations, others, or ourselves. To help another with a concern it is very effective to listen to content and feelings. Often the feelings are not openly stated but lie just below the content. We might feel sad, happy, lonely, lost, depressed, angry, hurt, jealous, abused, joyful. Your job is to listen to and acknowledge the client's feelings. You want to give the client a chance to both experience and express feelings. It is important to attend to feelings because feelings are involved in most of our concerns and decisions. We are not computers, we also feel. Clients have a right to their feelings and denying a feeling does not make it go away. Sometimes we want to try to cheer someone up who is sad or depressed but it is important to acknowledge the persons feelings before taking any other action.

STOP...14

Part 1. For 5 minutes brainstorm as many feeling words as you can.

Part 2. Return to the six statements from the last exercise.

Identify the feelings that might accompany the content.

See Appendix 2 for possible feelings of these clients.

The basic equation to keep in mind when trying to paraphrase a client is:

Content + Feeling = Effective Paraphrase

5.3 Core Conditions

Many counselling theorists have written about the core conditions. These conditions are central to effective helping. If the core conditions are lacking, counselling has the potential to be for worse rather than for better. Different theorists offer different conditions. I believe the important ones are empathy, respect, genuiness, concreteness, self-disclosure, and confrontation.

I will briefly define each core condition. During your role plays for this training, your trainer will want you to demonstrate the core conditions at a basic level.

Empathy. Empathy is the most important core condition. Empathy is the ability to see the world from the client's perspective. It is like crawling around inside their skin to get a sense of how they feel and experience the concern they are talking about. To feel empathy you must accept clients for who they are. You must be able to communicate your empathy to the client. This is done through accurate paraphrases and reflection of feeling. If you are fully empathic there is a good chance your client will improve. The key to empathy is asking yourself how do clients see the world and how can you communicate this to them?

Respect. When you treat a person with honor, regard, and esteem you are demonstrating respect. Respect lets the other person know that you are for them and you want to help them. Respect involves a sincere belief in your client. You also demonstrate respect by letting the client know that

they are the expert when dealing with their concerns, and you are there to assist them. Respect means having the belief that clients can take steps to solve their problems.

Genuineness. This is sometimes called realness or congruence. This means being yourself in the relationship not just playing the role of counsellor. Carl Rogers believes that the more you are yourself the greater the likelihood that your client will change and grow in a constructive manner. To be genuine means you must be aware of your feelings and develop the skills to communicate these with the client.

Concreteness. Concrete means getting specific. You assist the client in clarifying what they mean. You do not let language get too vague or abstract. For instance, the word love has many meanings and if it was an important word, used often by the client, you would want the client to elaborate on what they mean.

Self-disclosure. You feel comfortable talking about your feelings and thoughts in a way that is helpful to the person you are helping. Especially as a peer counsellor, there will be times when it will be useful to share something of yourself with the client. The rule of thumb is that your sharing should help or benefit the client - you are there to meet the clients needs.

Confrontation. In a helpful way you challenge the discrepancies or distortions in the other person's communication. This should be done after a solid counselling relationship has been established. As a rule of thumb, confront a person's strengths rather than weaknesses.

STOP...15

Explain the core conditions in your own words.

What are your reactions to the core conditions?

For instance: How do you feel about self-disclosure and confrontation. Is there a core condition you might have difficulty with? Why?

5.4 Problem-Solving Model

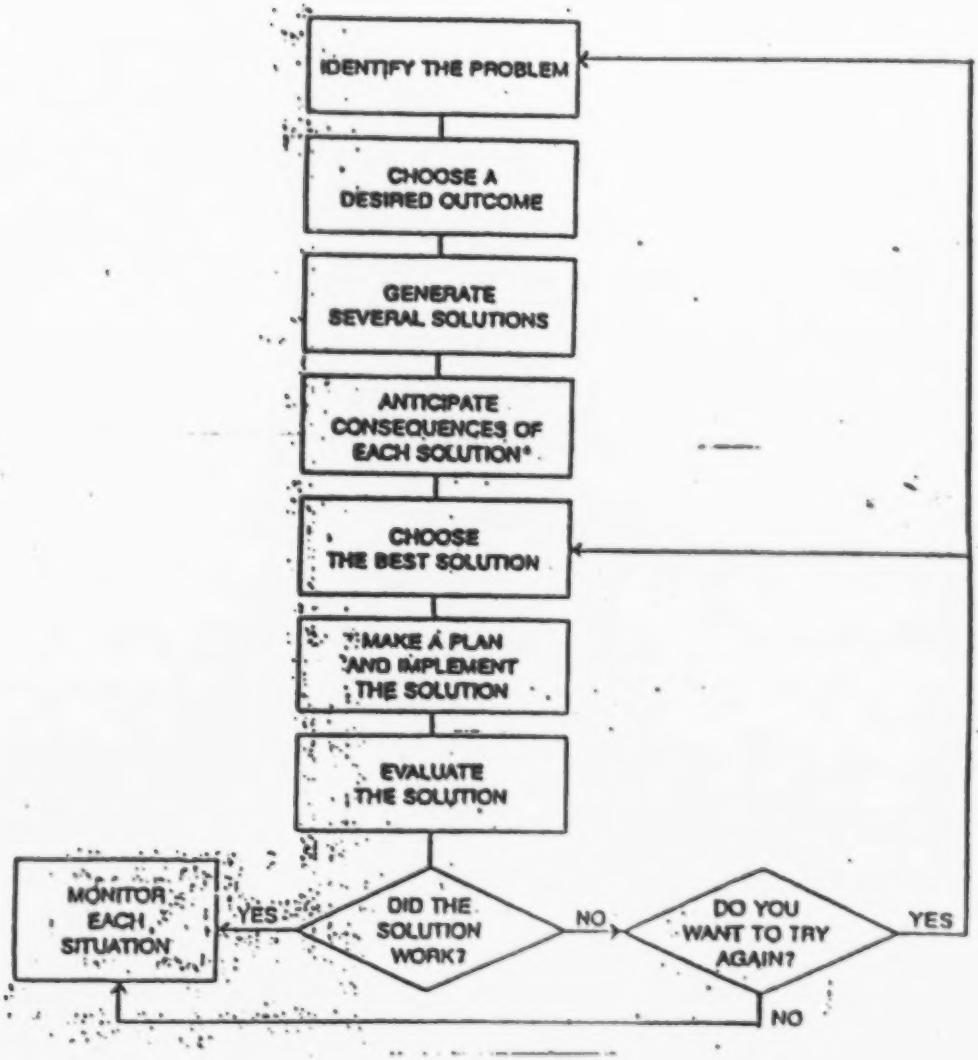
Counselling often involves some form of problem-solving. For some clients, your active attending will be enough for them to know what to do and they will need no further assistance. Other clients will feel stuck even trying to identify their primary concern and where to go from there. The advantage of following a model is that it slows down the problem-solving process as the problem can be examined in many different ways with a variety of proposed solutions. Your role is to assist the client in becoming a problem-solver. Try to avoid solving the problem for them, rather act as a guide on the problem-solving journey. Point out areas that need further attention or things that the client might want to consider but has not.

This problem-solving model consists of seven steps (see model, next page). I will briefly outline each step then ask you to use the model to solve a hypothetical problem.

Step 1: Identify the Problem.....You and the client need to take time to identify the problem. Your active attending will assist the client in identifying the concern. Sometimes what starts out as the client's main concern becomes a lesser concern. This is why it is important to take time to understand the client and to allow the relationship between you and the client to build. Do not solve the problem in the first ten minutes of counselling even though many clients will ask you what they should do within that time. If you don't take the time to explore and identify the problem you might solve a false problem.

Step 2: Choose a Desired Solution.....What does the client want to see

PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL



happen. Take time to find a desired solution. The solution should be realistic and specific and the client should be able to know when it has been achieved. Often at this stage you want to use the core condition of concreteness.

Step 3: Generate Several Solutions.....This step involves brainstorming. You and the client should list as many solutions as you can to the problem. Do not stop with the first two solutions you generate. Be creative at this stage and do not evaluate any solutions until the next step. The more solutions, the more options the client has to choose from.

Step 4: Anticipate Consequences of Each Solution.....At this stage go back over the list you generated during step 3. Look at each solution and anticipate the positive and negative effects of implementing each solution.

Step 5: Choose a Desired Solution.....After examining the solutions choose one to put into effect. Let the client choose the one they want to use because they are the person who will have to live with the consequences and take action.

Step 6: Make a Plan and Implement the Solution.....What specifically should the client do? What is the next step? Help the client to be concrete and specific. Also help the client to realize any difficulties that might be involved in the plan.

Step 7: Evaluate the Solution.....Encourage the client to evaluate the solution. They need to keep assessing how things are going. Is the plan working or not. If not, why not? What might they need to change? The client might come back to you for more assistance. If the solution worked the model is completed. If the solution didn't work the client might decide to forget about it. Or, the client might decide to try again. The client might need to re-identify the problem or maybe try a different solution.

STOP...16

Either alone or with a partner use the model for this concern:

A couple from Winnipeg are trying to decide how to spend their winters.

Should they stay in Winnipeg, Move to another location for the winter

Or move to another location permanently. Use all seven steps.

See Appendix 3 for a sample solution.

5.5 Assisting Clients to Action

Sometimes, all clients want is some one to tell their stories too. In most cases clients want to understand something and to take action. The core conditions will show your competence as a counsellor and your belief in the client. Your belief in the client being able to do what is necessary in the situation will go a long way to helping the client to take action. Paying close attention to the problem and all the difficulties in taking action will also help your client. So will setting concrete specific goals that are believable and achieveable. We live in a quick society, with instant on TVs and instant coffee. We get used to things being very quick and it is sometimes difficult for clients when change takes time. Not becoming frustrated with your clients will help them if they experience a set-back or difficulty.

There is no magic in helping clients to action. Giving the client more responsibiltiy for all phases of the counselling process will help the client to take responsibility for change.

5.6 Limitations and Referrals

It is very important to know your limitations. You are a peer counsellor and there will be times when you do not feel qualified or comfortable dealing with a specific concern. Do not try to help someone if you feel you are getting in over your head. Do you feel competent to deal with a suicidal

person or an abuser or someone with sexual problems? Generally, you will not have the training to deal with these issues and it is time to make a referral.

Referrals are in the best interest of the client. You are not an expert on everything and one of the things you can learn is the various agencies and people who can be of further assistance to the client you are working with. Maybe they need to see a lawyer or some one at the Income Security Program. Referrals will be covered in another part of this training program.

From a counselling perspective, take your time to make sure you know what the concern is before you make a referral. Do not leave your client feeling abandoned. Explain why you are making the referral and who you are making the referral to. Decide if you should make the contact for the client or if it would be better for the client to make the contact. You might phone your referral source to let them know that a client of yours will be contacting them.

STOP....17

List 5 of your limitations as a peer counsellor.

List the advantages of making a referral.

5.7 Closing and Termination

The counselling relationship generally comes to an end when the counselling goal has been reached. In bringing a counselling relationship to an end, tie up any loose ends - maybe summarize what you felt took place and, give your client a chance to do the same. Be very sensitive to the client's feeling about the end of counselling. Provide an opportunity to discuss the last session if you have met for a few times. Ending a close relationship often involves a sense of loss and perhaps grief. Clients, during the pre-retirement stage, often deal with a number of losses: from loss of a

job to less income to loss of daily contact with certain people. Be sensitive to their sense of loss and and provide an opportunity to explore the feelings that could range from anger or sadness to guilt or excitement. Even if the problem seems resolved it is useful to leave the door open and invite the client back if they feel a need to discuss the issue further or if a new concern arises. Finally, you might ask the clients' permission to contact them at a later date to see how they are doing. This thoughtfulness indicates your caring.

Speaking of closing, this just about brings this manual to an end. After this section you will find an appendix with sample answers to a few STOPs you had along the way. An annotated list of seven books you might read to develop your skills further completes the manual. Reading can help you to improve, but all the words on paper will not make you an effective peer counsellor. Your practise during the training program and seeing your first clients will go a long way to building your confidence and abilities. I hope that you've found these pages useful and that you will apply what you've learned here. There is an old saying about each ending being a new beginning and I wonder what your new beginning in peer counselling will be like. I can't resist, here is the final stop which I hope serves to keep you going. I wish you well.

STOP...18

CARRY ON COUNSELLING!

List 3 ways you intend to keep improving your counselling skills.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Reframing.

Figure 1: Known as the wife/mother-in-law illusion. Tends to be seen as an old woman looking down or a young woman looking away. If you can't see both figure show them to someone else and ask for their assistance.

Figure 2: Horizontally the middle figure is seen as "13".
Vertically the middle figure is seen as "B".

Figure 3: Two faces looking in at one another.
A vase, candlestick holder, pedestal, etc.

Figure 4: The word T I E (The letters are in white).

Figure 5: 30 squares. (1 large square, 16 single squares, 9 squares of four boxes, and 4 squares of 9 boxes = 30 squares).

Accident Puzzle: The doctor is the boy's mother.

Appendix 2: Content and Feelings.

A. Content.

There are no single correct answers to the content paraphrases. Here is one sample for each of them. It would be useful to discuss your attempts at paraphrases with the other counsellor trainees.

1. "You're unsure about staying in Winnipeg or moving to B.C."

2. "You are concerned about having enough money to retire on."

3. "Your husband has let you down because he doesn't want to retire and travel."

4. "You are concerned about looking after your mother, not being able to meet her needs at home but not wanting to have her in a nursing home."

5. "Your wife has died and you just don't know what to do."

6. "You can finally take control and do what you want to do."

B. Feelings.

Once again, there are no single correct labels for feelings. In actual counselling you would also get a number of cues from the client's non-verbal behavior. Here are some possible feelings of each client.

1. Ambivalent, uncertain, confused.

2. Worried, concerned, panicky.

3. Terrible, ambivalent, worried.

4. Unhappy, disappointed, let-down.

5. Alone, lonely, lost, sad.

6. Excited, in-control, joy.

Appendix 3: Problem-Solving.

This is only a sample answer. You might have come up with very different ideas. This should reinforce the need to assist the client in doing the active problem-solving.

Step 1. Get the client to specifically identify the problem. ie. To determine where to live in retirement.

Step 2. Solution. To make a decision and take action this November.

Step 3. Brainstorm possible solutions:

Move to B.C. permanently.

Move to Nova Scotia.

Move to B.C. for winters only.

Buy a trailer in Phoenix for winters.

Stay in Winnipeg all winter, vacation for 2 weeks in Hawaii.

Go to Europe.

Move to Mexico.

Buy a sailboat and sail around the world.

Take 2 or 3 smaller vacations.

etc. etc. etc.

Step 4. Evaluate each solution. I will just elaborate on one possible solution.

Move to B.C. permanently——

Advantages: Remain in Canada(medicare, etc.); friends in Victoria; not far from Winnipeg (2 hour plane ride); have been to B.C. on vacations and liked it; could still go to hockey games; etc.

Disadvantages: Still quite far from children and grandchildren; housing might be too expensive; possibly too damp - arthritis problems; do not have family doctor in B.C.; etc.

Step 5. Choose desired solution. The couple decided to live in B.C. for one winter. They would keep their house in Winnipeg and make a decision next spring if they wanted to remain in B.C. permanently.

Step 6. Plan. Contact friends in B.C. about rental accomodation and family doctors. Discuss the move with the children. Find a reliable tenant for their home in Winnipeg. Get the car in top shape for the trip. etc.

Step 7. Evaluate the Solution. The couple will evaluate this solution next spring and make a more permananent decision then. They asked to come back and see the counsellor to get some assistance with the decision.

Further Study

There are a vast range of books on counselling and helping. I would encourage you to go to the library and look at the various books on counselling, therapy, or helping and read what different authors have to say about this subject. The alphabetical list below are a few books that you might be interested in studying. If you want to be an effective peer counsellor you must continue to read, learn and re-learn about counselling.

1. Ronald Adler & Neil Towne (1984) Looking Out/ Looking In. Toronto: Holt Rinehart & Winston., 4th edition.

This is an excellent book on interpersonal relationships. It is easy to read and packed full of thoughtful ideas and suggestions. Topics include: Self-concept, Percepetion, Language, Nonverbal Communication, Emotions, Building Positive Relationships, and Resolving Interpersonal Conflict.

2. Patricia Alpaugh & Margaret Haney (1978) Counseling the Older Adult. Toronto: Lexington Books.

This training manual is into its sixth printing. It is designed for the paraprofessional and beginning counsellor. There are lots of exercises you can do. I recommend this book as a more in depth supplement to this primer.

3. Keith Buckley, John Kleinbaum, & Ann Strelow (1981). Peer Counseling Trainer Manual. Minneapolis: Univeristy of Minnesota.